

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A die cleaning method for removing a forming-material from a die used in forming the forming-material constituted of clay containing a binder, ~~characterized by comprising the steps of:~~

_____ removing a part or all of the binder contained in the forming-material from the die; and

_____ removing the forming-material from the die after removing a part or all of the binder.

8. (Previously Presented) The die cleaning method according to claim 7, wherein the step of removing a part or all of the binder is performed by heating the die.

9. (Previously Presented) The die cleaning method according to claim 8, wherein a heating temperature is in a range of 200 to 500°C.

10. (Previously Presented) The die cleaning method according to claim 7, wherein the step of removing the forming-material is performed by spraying a fluid to the die at a pressure of 40 kg/cm² or less.

11. (Previously Presented) The die cleaning method according to claim 7, wherein the die includes a member constituted of cemented carbide.

12. (Previously Presented) The die cleaning method according to claim 7, wherein the die includes a member having slits.